

THE BOOK CLUB OF CALIFORNIA

Quar-
terly **NEWS**
LETTER

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A REVIEW OF 1941

By ALFRED SUTRO, *President*

DURING THE EVENTFUL YEAR 1941 the Club's activities have been maintained and our members have given gratifying evidence of their continued interest and support. Notwithstanding the increasing gravity of the world situation and the growing uncertainty as to what the future might hold, the Club has, I think sensibly, chosen to carry on so far as was practicable with its normal functions and services. During the year, therefore, the

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book publishing program was continued, a new series of keepsakes was planned and issued (although it was unfortunately not possible to complete and distribute all the parts of the series before the end of the year), and the "Quarterly News-Letter" has appeared as usual.

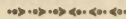
During 1941 the Club published Captain Beechey's "An Account of a Visit to California in 1826-27," a work that because of the importance and interest of its text and the distinction of its printing forms a notable addition to the Club's list. The keepsake series, "California on Canvas," which reproduces, in their original colors, twelve paintings of pioneer California subjects, promises to be one of the most desirable sets the Club has issued since the keepsake series were inaugurated eight years ago. The "News-Letter" has, as always, kept the members informed of the Club's activities and plans; in addition it has presented in readable form a number of articles of genuine interest to the book collectors of the West.

In March of this year the Club sustained an irreparable loss in the death of Albert M. Bender, who was one of the guiding spirits of our organization since its founding nearly thirty years ago, and whose untiring efforts on its behalf are too well known to the members to need detailing here. Elsewhere in this issue of the "News-Letter" will be found an announcement of the establishment of a fund granted the Club by the Bender estate for the purpose of supplying copies of Club publications to a group of libraries at which Albert Bender founded and maintained collections of California fine printing.

As regards membership the Club's record for 1941 is slightly less encouraging than in former years, which is perhaps to be expected in view of world conditions. The roll shows a net loss of twenty-three as compared to De-

ember 1940. This has been mainly due to the fact that it has become increasingly difficult to secure a sufficient number of new members to compensate for the normal decrease in membership. I am pleased to report that in 1941 there was no marked increase in the number of resignations over prior years. Maintaining the membership is, of course, of vital importance to the proper functioning of our organization. But it is also evidence of an appreciation on the part of the members of what the Club stands for, and this, it seems to me, is our best guaranty that the Club will successfully weather whatever storms may lie ahead.

That the problems of the immediate future will be difficult must be recognized and, so far as possible, provided against. The year ends with the country at war. Nineteen forty-two will bring many new demands on every member. Yet I am convinced that few of us will wish to withdraw our support from those literary and cultural organizations from which we have derived pleasure in the past and to which we must look for worthwhile recreation in the difficult times confronting us. It was because of the loyal support of its members that the Club, twenty-five years ago, was able to survive the trials of the First World War. With the same support and loyalty it will surely surmount whatever may befall in the uncertain months ahead.



THE AUTHOR OF "VICE VERSA"

THE NAME Thomas A. Guthrie probably means nothing at all to the vast majority of present-day readers of novels. Even when it is added that Guthrie wrote under

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the *nom-de-plume* of F. Anstey it is unlikely that many will recognize the name, and those who do recognize it will in all likelihood be among those whose memory runs back to the beginning of the century and before. These latter, however, will not need to be told that F. Anstey was an English humorist whose novels and plays enjoyed tremendous popularity on both sides of the Atlantic in the remote and uncomplicated era of the '80s and '90s. There was a time when not to have read his latest novel or to have seen his most recently produced comedy was to confess oneself completely out of step with the literary fashions of the times. What is more, those who failed to see or read him missed a great deal of genuine entertainment, for Anstey was a first-rate humorist, with a marked talent for the ludicrous, both in plot and characterization. His books, as a few modern readers have discovered, are far less "dated" than the productions of most of his contemporaries.

Thomas Anstey Guthrie was born in London in 1856. He was educated in the law (at King's College and Cambridge), but turned to literature soon after his graduation; so far as is known he never prepared a brief or argued a case. Instead, he published, in 1882, a book called "*Vice Versa*," which at once became immensely popular. "*Vice Versa, or a Lesson to Fathers*"—to quote its full title—was an imaginative tale of a father who miraculously changed places with his schoolboy son. It was followed two years later by "*The Black Poodle*" and, at regular intervals, by such successes as "*The Tinted Venus*" (1885), "*The Fallen Idol*" (1886) and a long line of others. The best known of his plays was "*The Man from Blankley's*," first produced in 1901. His last important work was "*An Imaginary Invalid*," a comedy produced

For the Mayoress' Book.

"Then, is only one thing that irritateth
a woman more than the man who
doth not understand her, & that is
the man who doth."

The Proverbs of Piljosh.

FROM

Name F. Austey

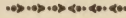
Address 16 Duke St. Mansions, W.

1/- Enclosed.

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in 1920. He died as recently as 1934, at the age of seventy-eight.

The brief but characteristic manuscript here reproduced in facsimile was probably written by Anstey as a contribution to some charity. There is some reason to believe that it was auctioned off at a benefit or bazaar, although in what worthy cause it was sold (if it was so sold) is a matter now lost in darkness even more complete than that into which this excellent author's works have been slowly sinking.



THE BENDER FUND

AMONG THE VARIED generosities of the late Albert M. Bender, not the least important were those stemming from his desire to foster a wider appreciation of the products of the California printers. His interest in fine typography and in those who produced it was of many years' standing. He was a regular and liberal purchaser of the output of the California presses, large and small, for well over three decades. Although he owned a comprehensive collection of the work of the Western typographers, his interest was by no means confined to the building up of a personal library of fine printing; he was always far more interested in sharing his enthusiasm with others. Whatever would help to bring the productions of the fine printers to the attention of others, and so foster a desire for their collection and study, was sure to have his enthusiastic support.

It was this desire to spread abroad a wider appreciation of good bookmaking, particularly as exemplified by the California printers, that prompted him, many years ago, to

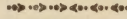
place selected examples of the work of the local presses in several California libraries. The original showings at Mills College and the San Francisco Public Library were gradually built up, and at the same time new ones were established. Presently collections supported entirely or mainly by him were on display in no less than ten libraries, ranging all the way from California to Dublin, Ireland. How many thousands of books, pamphlets and broadsides he presented to these collections cannot be estimated, but their aggregate number must have been very large. For, having established a collection, he was careful to see that it was kept up to date by frequent additions. To take a single example: In recent years he had a standing order with the Club for ten copies of each of its publications, one copy of which was sent on the publication date to each of the ten libraries in which he maintained collections.

That a work so important in this field of California fine printing seemed likely to be brought to a close by Albert Bender's death was of course a matter of regret to the collectors of the Coast. It is with a great deal of pleasure, therefore, that the Club is able to announce that a grant of \$1500 has been given the Club by the Bender estate, in accordance with certain provisions in his will, for the purpose of continuing the gifts of Club publications to the various printing collections he founded and supported during his lifetime. The bequest will assure that, in so far as the Club's publications are concerned, the various collections will receive periodical additions and thus be kept in contemporary condition for a period of approximately ten years.

It might be added that should anyone desire to make an addition to the fund his contribution will of course be gratefully received. Such contributions will be used to

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continue presenting the Club publications to the various Bender collections after the funds provided in the original grant are expended.

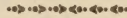


ELECTED TO MEMBERSHIP

THE FOLLOWING NAMES have been added to the roll since September:

<i>Member</i>		<i>Sponsor</i>
J. C. O'G. Anderson	San Francisco, Cal.	Alfred Sutro
Stanley M. Arndt	San Marino, Cal.	Lawrence Livingston
Miss Margaret Conley	Caldwell, Idaho	Mrs. E. S. Rosenstein
Dr. William A. Key	San Mateo, Cal.	Mrs. Ray E. Cronemiller
John C. Macfarland	South Pasadena, Cal.	J. R. Brehm
C. F. Metteer	Sacramento, Cal.	Dr. J. Roy Jones

The total membership, including the above, is now 531. This is a net loss of slightly more than twenty during 1941. For comment on this decline in the membership roll, see President Sutro's resume of the year's activities, beginning on page one of this issue.



CALIFORNIA ON CANVAS

THE CLUB'S eighth annual series of keepsakes, "California on Canvas," got under way in March of this year with the distribution of the first three of the projected twelve parts. Parts four and five followed in August, and the sixth part a month later.

At the time the last-named folder was mailed to the members it was stated that the remaining six parts would be completed and distributed before the end of the year. Time has proved this statement to be a bit on the optimistic side. Due consideration was not given to the fact

that the final months of 1941 were destined to become a period of growing shortages of materials for civilian use—and consequently of unlooked-for delays. The result was that the Club had to give up the hope of completing the series during the current year. It is glad to report, however, that paper for the final six folders is now available and that, barring unlikely further complications, the series will be completed fairly early in 1942.

Although this delay is regrettable, it may be pointed out that the series is well worth waiting for. A group of twelve reproductions of paintings of early California subjects (most of them never before published), "California on Canvas" will constitute a portfolio of pioneer scenes of far more than ordinary interest from both the historical and artistic standpoints. The fact that the set is being produced by The Grabhorn Press is a guaranty that both the color reproductions and the typography will be consistent with the interest and importance of the paintings themselves.

When the series was launched, a limited number of duplicate sets (in addition to those needed to supply each member) was provided for the benefit of those who wished to purchase additional sets for gifts. These were offered, to members only, at \$5 per set. A few such sets are still available and orders are invited as long as the supply lasts.

The Club also has on hand, for immediate delivery, a supply of slipcases for this 1942 series. The cases are uniform with those provided for the safekeeping of the earlier keepsakes series and, like them, are made in two styles: all-cloth covering (\$2), and cloth with morocco back (\$3).

The unavoidable delay in completing the current series

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has likewise delayed plans for the ninth series, to be sent the members during 1942. An announcement and description of the latter will be made in the next issue of the "News-Letter."



MEMORIAL

THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS died during 1941:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Elected</i>
Albert M. Bender	1912
Melbert B. Cary, Jr.	1927
Mrs. Herbert E. Clayburgh	1920
John O. Kroyer	1938



NOTES ON PUBLICATIONS

THE PUBLICATION of "Byron and the Countess Guiccioli," which was announced in the September "News-Letter" as scheduled to appear in December, has had to be postponed. By present plans it will appear in the spring of 1942. The decision to move the publication date to March or April was reached only after it had become apparent that the time was too short to permit bringing out the book on the date originally fixed, December 1st. To have issued it in mid-December would hardly have allowed enough time to circularize the membership, to receive the orders, and to deliver the books in time for pre-Christmas distribution. An announcement giving complete details of this, the Club's next publication, will reach the members presently.

When the decision to postpone the usual Christmas

book was reached, a booklet listing the available publications was prepared and printed. This was mailed early in December. Notwithstanding the fact that it reached the members during a week when matters of far more importance were claiming their attention, we are happy to report that its message was not entirely disregarded. During the ten-day period from December 14th to December 24th orders for about \$300 worth of Club publications were received, all of which was delivered before Christmas. The supply of several of the titles on the list was materially reduced by this sale, and one was entirely sold out. The latter was the 1939 keepsake series, "Coast and Valley Towns of Early California," complete sets of which are no longer available.

The Publication Committee now has under consideration a little publication that promises to be of unusual interest to collectors. This is an essay on books, written by one of America's most celebrated poets and bibliophiles, Eugene Field. So far as can be learned, the essay has not been published since its original appearance on the pages of a Chicago newspaper in the early '90s. If and when the Club edition appears it will be accompanied by a reproduction of a page or two of the original manuscript, which is written in Field's flowing but microscopic hand, with the ornamental title and initial letters characteristic of many Eugene Field manuscripts.

Since December 7 the Publication Committee has been giving careful thought to the question of how and to what extent the outbreak of hostilities will affect this phase of the Club's activities. Suggestions from the members bearing on this question, particularly with reference to what types of material they believe the Club might be well advised to publish during the period of the emer-

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gency, are cordially invited. They will be received with pleasure and acted on if they seem practicable.

THE BOOK CLUB OF CALIFORNIA, founded in 1912, is a non-commercial, non-profit association of booklovers and collectors who have a special interest in Pacific Coast literature and fine printing.

Its chief aims are to further the interests of book collectors in the West, to promote an understanding and appreciation of fine books, and to enhance the pleasures that come from their collection and study. These aims find expression in the following activities:

PUBLICATIONS: The Club publishes two or three books a year, in editions of from 250 to 350 copies, which are sold at cost, and only to members. The publications are selected examples of the work of the foremost fine printers of the West. **KEEPSAKES:** Each year the Club issues and distributes to members a series of keepsakes, in six or twelve parts, each of which is designed by a different Pacific Coast printer. **NEWS-LETTER:** This quarterly keeps members informed of Club activities and presents in each number brief papers on various phases of book collecting, with special reference to the interests of Western collectors. The News-Letter, like the keepsakes, is supplied without cost to the members.

The Club is limited to six hundred members. When vacancies exist membership is open to all who are in sympathy with its aims and whose applications are approved by the Board of Directors. Regular Membership involves no responsibilities beyond payment of the annual dues of \$10.00, there being no initiation fee. Dues date from the month of the member's election.

The Club's policies and activities are governed by a board of directors, elected annually. The present officers and directors are: Alfred Sutro, President; Flodden W. Heron, Vice-President; Oscar Lewis, Secretary; E. V. Weller, Allen L. Chickering, C. O. G. Miller, James K. Moffitt, Morgan A. Gunst, Directors.